

Community, Counseling and Correctional Services, Inc.

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June 21, 2016

Sentencing Commission Members Counsel of State Government Officials

Allow me to introduce myself: My name is Alex Vukovich and I have been with the WATCH program since it opened in 2002. I have also been the program administrator for the past 10 years.

I have a serious concern about the possible cutting of the length of stay for the WATCH program. As you know the WATCH program is 6 months in duration and is a modified therapeutic community. The modified therapeutic community is based on the belief that chronic addiction comes with an acquired lifestyle and that recovery requires a holistic approach that challenges deeply the ingrained behaviors and teaches healthy alternatives. The length of time to accomplish changes is important. The clientele commonality is that they all are convicted DUI felons and have a set sentence which cannot be changed. Most have been through treatment and continued to use despite legal consequences.

The Department of Justice in 1995 endorsed long term treatment for the incarcerated criminal. The DOJ acknowledged the least expensive and most cost effective treatment was a long term therapeutic community approach while they were incarcerated. That sentiment has not changed considering the DOJ funded a research project by the University of Texas San Antonio in 2012. This was an intensive two-year project that examined process and outcome evaluations of three states-sponsored alcohol programs within Montana, Ohio and Texas. This study involved program design, quality of treatment and delivery and program effectiveness. The study concluded that although this study examined three programs, only Montana's WATCH program was found to be near ideal in design and performance. The research team recommended the WATCH program be replicated nationwide.

A program at least 6 months long allows the client to challenge the addiction as well as change the cognitive process. The WATCH program strives to be 'the' Modified Therapeutic Model. The program has treated over 3000 clients in the 14 years it has been open and has saved the DOC around 4.7 million dollars a year because of approach and length of program as well as being compared to the cost of a 13 month incarceration at MSP. It is commonly agreed that the modified treatment program should be intense and offer restorative tools to be successful when discharged. The 'peer helping peer' in modified TC works and works well at the six month level. The DOJ in 1995 also stated a 12 – 18 month residential treatment should be recommended.

Bismarck Transition Center
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Bismarck, ND 58504
701-222-3440 Fax 701-222-3599

Butte Pre-Release Center
Women's Transitional Center
Jay Grant, Adm.
58-68 W. Broadway
Butte, MT 59701
BPRC 406-782-2316
WTC 406-782-6446 Fax 406-723-1170

Connections Corrections Program
Dave Boyd, Adm.
111 W. Broadway
Butte, MT 59701
406-782-6626 Fax 406-782-6676

Discovery House
Carole Kovacich, Adm.
800 S. Main Street
Anaconda, MT 59711
406-563-3842 Fax 406-563-2451

Gallatin Re-Entry Facility
Melissa Kelly, Adm.
675 S. 16 Street
Bozeman, MT 59715
406-994-0300 Fax 406-994-0306

Martin Hall Juvenile Detention Facility
Robert Palmquist, Adm.
P.O. Box 670
Medical Lake, WA 99022
509-299-7733 Fax 509-299-1447

Nexus Program
Marcie Conmy Adm.
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Lewistown, MT 59457
406-535-6660 Fax 406-535-6665

RYO Correctional Facility
Travis Hettick, Adm.
360 Galen Street
Deer Lodge, MT 59722
406-693-9975 Fax 406-693-9988

START Program
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WATCH Program
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WATCH East
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Glendive, MT 59330
406-377-6001 Fax 406-377-6004

To ensure the convicted DUI felon gets treatment the WATCh program has been an incentive to stay out of prison and this works. The cost of treatment vs prison time is evident. The program is unique; it offers treatment for those who were driving under the influence. The separation of this population can be promising in reducing the prison population. The recidivism rate for the WATCh program is remarkable with 78% of the WATCh clients not coming back into the prison system/DOC.

The success of the modified therapeutic community relies on the structure and utilizes evidence based material. This program has taken great care in designing and maintaining the structural integrity of treatment delivery. The 6 month model allows for change - it ensures the treatment families work together for one goal – Sobriety.

Respectfully,

Alex Vukovich
WATCh Administrator